

**LISTING OF THE CLAIMS**

The following listing, if entered, replaces all prior versions of the claims in the present application.

1-54. (Cancelled)

55. **(Currently Amended)** A method comprising:  
populating an access control list with a destination user group identifier, wherein  
said destination user group identifier identifies a destination user group of  
a destination,  
said access control list comprises a source user group field configured to  
store a source user group identifier and a destination user group field  
configured to store a destination user group identifier,  
said source user group comprises a plurality of source network devices,  
**said source user group is assigned to said source based on a role of**  
**said source,**  
said destination user group comprises a plurality of destination network  
devices, and  
said access control list is configured to allow said source user group  
identifier and said destination user group identifier to be compared.

56. (Original) The method of claim 55, wherein  
said destination user group is assigned to said destination based on a role of said  
destination.

57. (Original) The method of claim 55, wherein  
said populating is performed by a network device and comprises  
    sending a request to another network device, and  
    receiving a response from said another network device, wherein  
        said response includes said destination user group identifier, and  
        said destination user group identifier identifies said destination  
        user group.
58. (Original) The method of claim 55, further comprising:  
comparing a user group of a packet with said destination user group.
59. (Original) The method of claim 58, wherein  
said user group of said packet is a source user group,  
said destination user group is a user group of a destination of said packet, and  
said destination is said destination of said packet.
60. (Original) The method of claim 59, wherein  
said source user group is assigned to a source of said packet based on a role of  
    said source, and  
said destination user group is assigned to said destination based on a role of said  
    destination.
61. (Original) The method of claim 59, wherein  
said source user group is indicated by a source user group identifier stored in said  
    packet, and  
said destination user group is indicated by a destination user group stored in a  
    network device receiving said packet.
62. (Original) The method of claim 59, further comprising:  
determining said source user group; and  
determining said destination user group by looking up said destination user group  
    in an access control list.

63. (Original) The method of claim 62, wherein said access control list is a role-based access control list.

64. (Original) The method of claim 62, wherein said determining said source user group comprises:

extracting a source user group identifier from said packet, wherein said source user group identifier identifies said source user group.

65. **(Currently Amended)** A computer program product comprising:  
a first set of instructions, executable on a computer system, configured to populate an access control list with a destination user group identifier, wherein said destination user group identifier identifies a destination user group of a destination,  
said access control list comprises a source user group field configured to store a source user group identifier and a destination user group field configured to store a destination user group identifier,  
said source user group comprises a plurality of source network devices,  
**said source user group is assigned to said source based on a role of said source,**  
said destination user group comprises a plurality of destination network devices, and  
said access control list is configured to allow said source user group identifier and said destination user group identifier to be compared;  
and  
computer readable storage media, wherein said computer program product is encoded in said computer readable storage media.

66. (Original) The computer program product of claim 65, further comprising:  
a second set of instructions, executable on said computer system, configured to compare a user group of a packet with said destination user group.

67. (Original) The computer program product of claim 66, wherein said user group of said packet is a source user group, said destination user group is a user group of a destination of said packet, and said destination is said destination of said packet.

68. (Original) The computer program product of claim 67, further comprising:

- a third set of instructions, executable on said computer system, configured to determine said source user group; and
- a fourth set of instructions, executable on said computer system, configured to determine said destination user group by looking up said destination user group in an access control list.

69. (Original) The computer program product of claim 68, wherein said third set of instructions comprises:

- a first subset of instructions, executable on said computer system, configured to extracting a source user group identifier from said packet, wherein said source user group identifier identifies said source user group.

70. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

- means for populating an access control list with a destination user group identifier, wherein
- said destination user group identifier identifies a destination user group of a destination,
- said access control list comprises a source user group field configured to store a source user group identifier and a destination user group field configured to store a destination user group identifier,
- said source user group comprises a plurality of source network devices, **said source user group is assigned to said source based on a role of said source,**
- said destination user group comprises a plurality of destination network devices, and

said access control list is configured to allow said source user group identifier and said destination user group identifier to be compared.

71. (Original) The apparatus of claim 70, further comprising:  
means for comparing a user group of a packet with said destination user group.

72. (Original) The apparatus of claim 71, wherein  
said user group of said packet is a source user group,  
said destination user group is a user group of a destination of said packet, and  
said destination is said destination of said packet.

73. (Original) The apparatus of claim 72, further comprising:  
means for determining said source user group; and  
means for determining said destination user group by looking up said destination user group in an access control list.

74. (Original) The apparatus of claim 73, wherein said means for determining said source user group comprises:  
means for extracting a source user group identifier from said packet, wherein  
said source user group identifier identifies said source user group.

75-117. (Cancelled)